

# SPOTLIGHT ON SAFEGUARDING

WORKING TOGETHER TO KEEP OUR YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE

October 2023

In this edition:

- Consent- what is it?
- Responsible image sharing

This months app focus: Snapchat



## Understanding Consent: What It Means for Children and Young People

Earlier this year, this photo made headlines and brought consent to the forefront. But what exactly is consent and why should we teach children and young people about it? Consent is giving your agreement freely, after fully understanding what you're agreeing to. It's important for children to understand what this means for them, how to ensure they have consent from others, and how to say no if they feel uneasy.



## Consent is

### Active



Just because they didn't say "No", doesn't mean you have consent. Only "Yes" means "Yes".

### A Choice



Everyone has the right to feel free to say "Yes" or "No" without pressure, threats, or manipulation.

### A Process



Consent requires ongoing conversations with lots of TRUST. Just because someone says "Yes" to one thing, doesn't mean they say "Yes" to ALL the things. Everyone has the right to change their mind at any point.

### Based on Equal Power



If someone is under-age, drunk, asleep, unconscious or you occupy a position of power or authority over them, they cannot consent.

What is meant by consent?

## The Importance of Discussing Consent with Your Child

Empowering your child to make informed decisions about their bodies is crucial in preventing sexual abuse. It also teaches them to respect other people's boundaries. While it may seem daunting, adopting a "drip feeding" approach can make it more manageable. Instead of having one big, uncomfortable talk, try to bring up the topic in casual conversation. This can make the discussion feel more natural for both you and your child.

## Teaching Children the Importance of Consent

When educating children about consent, it's essential to consider their age and level of understanding. For younger children, it's best to concentrate on instances of physical contact, which will establish a foundation of what is acceptable and what is not. Here are some useful pointers for starting this conversation with younger children:

- Use a straightforward question like, "Do you ask your friends if they want a hug before giving them one?" to open up a conversation about consent.
- Demonstrate examples of consent by asking if they would like a hug, and tell them that it's okay to say no if they feel uncomfortable.
- Teach them which areas of their body are private and that if anyone tries to touch them there, they have the right to say "No" and they should then tell a trusted adult.